

Water Solutions for the People of San Diego

San Diego City Council
Environment Committee Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 2014

Overview of Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance (LIRA) in San Diego

- San Diego has no assistance of any kind for low-income water ratepayers.
- In 2007, Councilmember Tony Atkins asked the City to consider voluntary ratepayer contributions to fund a Low-Income Ratepayer Assistance Program (LIRA).
- City Attorney agrees that City can establish program that accepts voluntary contributions to help ratepayers in need if program is self-funded – (see MOL of April 3, 2007.)

Number of Water Disconnections 2013 and 2014¹

- 2013 – 18,914 disconnections
- 2014 – 19,514 disconnections

1. Statistics provided by San Diego Public Utilities Dept. Does not include voluntary shut-offs

Number of Water Reconnections 2013 and 2014²

- 2013 - 20,495 reconnections
- 2014 - 20,031 reconnections

2. Statistics provided by San Diego Public Utilities Dept. Includes voluntary shut-offs later reconnected.

Charges for customer³

- Disconnect Fee \$30.00
- Reconnect Fee \$25.00
- Deposit – twice average bill and must be paid within three billing cycles.
 - PUD has limited authority to grant time extensions to pay bill or deposits.

3. San Diego Public Utilities Department website:
<http://www.sandiego.gov/water/rates/billing/policies.shtml>

California Public Utilities Commission⁴

- The CPUC regulates privately owned water companies that may provide specific assistance programs that are unique to each company's service territory.
- CPUC directs consumers to check with their water utility to find out about consumer programs.

4. CPUC Consumer Programs Brochure: http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/NR/rdonlyres/D1C3D475-7E43-4600-B750-53A71AD799C8/o/ConsumerProgramsBrochure_v19.pdf

City of San Francisco⁵

Offers Community Assistance Program (CAP) for qualifying residential single family customers based on income

- 15% Discount on water
- 35% Discount on sewer charges

5. San Francisco Public Utilities Commission website
<http://www.sfwater.org/index.aspx?page=131>

City of Los Angeles⁶

- Low Income Discount Program
- Senior Citizen/Disability Lifeline rates
- Life Support Device Discount
- Physical Certified Allowance

6. Los Angeles Dept. of Water and Power website

https://www.ladwp.com/ladwp/faces/wcnav_externalId/r-fa-discont-rate?_adf.ctrl-state=1ebiaqovw_29&_afLoop=45143775057535

Voluntary funded LIRA programs

- Tempe, AZ – accepts voluntary contributions and partners with a local non-profit service agency to distribute funds for qualified individuals.
- Salem, OR – also accepts voluntary contributions and partners with non-profit service agencies to distribute funds.

Ease of Administration

- Non-profits in San Diego, Campesinos Unidos (CUI) and MAAC project, have agreed to help the City administer such a program if available.
- CUI and MAAC Project currently administer programs for low-income electric ratepayer assistance in San Diego.
- No City employees or funding needed to monitor, audit, or manage program.

UCAN's Proposal to help low-income water ratepayers

City of San Diego:

- Give PUD more discretion to extend time for water customers to pay bills, fees and deposits.
- Ask PUD to identify any administrative issues in accepting voluntary ratepayer contributions.
- Ask PUD to identify any issues in partnering with CUI and MAAC Project to administer voluntarily funded LIRA program.